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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2543
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4746
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2408
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2994
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
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RHMFIUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
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UNCLAS ASHGABAT 000122

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, SCA/PPD, IIP, ECA
PLEASE PASS TO USTDA DAN STEIN

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS USTDA REGIONAL DIRECTOR
VISIT

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

¶2. (U) SUMMARY: U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) Director for Europe and Eurasia, Daniel Stein, visited Turkmenistan January 7-10. State media highlighted his visit and meetings at different GOTX ministries. The Turkmen State News Service used Post materials and worked closely with the Public Affairs Section for much of the coverage. International media also covered the visit based on the state media reporting and the Embassy-issued press release. END SUMMARY

MEDIA COVERAGE OF DAN STEIN'S VISIT TO TURKMENISTAN

¶3. (U) On January 8, the "Watan" TV news program (Turkmen) highlighted Dan Stein's meetings at different ministries and departments, emphasizing American interest in economic cooperation with Turkmenistan. On January 11, the government-run website "Turkmenistan Golden Age" (www.turkmenistan.gov.tm) (Turkmen, Russian and English) accurately reported on the visit. (NOTE: The article was written by a Turkmen State News Service (TDH) correspondent, who actually requested and conducted the interview with Stein and drew heavily from Post's press release for the visit. END NOTE.) The report accurately quoted Stein, calling the results of the visit absolutely productive, and emphasized the agreements in developing cooperation in the telecommunications industry. On the following day, the same article appeared in the state-run dailies "Neytralniy Turkmenistan" (Russian, circ. 46,091) and "Turkmenistan" (Turkmen, circ. 36,091).

¶4. (U) On January 12, Azeri news agency "Trend" (Russian, English), Russian "RIA OREANDA" (English) and BBC Monitoring Central Asia (English) also highlighted the visit. These outlets referred to the Turkmen State News Service (TDH) report. Several days later, on January 14, "Turkmenistan" TV channel (Russian, Turkmen, English, Chinese, Arabian, Persian, French) carried an accurate interview with Stein, who discussed successful results of his meetings and expressed U.S. companies' willingness to further invest in Turkmenistan's economy.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: Post was pleased with the interest in covering the Stein visit shown by Turkmen State News Agency, which has often

been reluctant to work directly with the Public Affairs Section. The use of Post's press release and coordination for an interview are signs that Turkmen leadership expressly wanted to highlight the Stein visit and commercial cooperation with the U.S. It may also signal a slight opening at the state news agency. Surprisingly, the pro-government website "turkmenistan.ru" (Russian, English) gave no coverage about the visit. This is a rare indication of some divergence in the normally uniform coverage of events by state media outlets. END COMMENT

MILES